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## Parents protest busing students to Beckman

**By George Stewart**  
For Irvine World News

Some upset parents gave the Tustin school board a piece of their collective minds Monday.

Residents of West Irvine, Tustin Ranch and the part of the school district west of the Santa Ana Freeway known as "the triangle" protested that students from the triangle will be bused to Beckman High School when it opens next fall.

They are angry that the school board, on Sept. 29, adopted a new high school boundary map that transfers students from the triangle, mostly from Latino and low-income families, from Foothill High to Beckman in Irvine, while North Tustin neighborhoods will remain in the Foothill attendance area. The board's action went against the recommendations made by a 13-member citizen committee formed to draw up possible maps for school attendance areas.

Members of a group calling itself SIMBY (Schools in My Back Yard) called for the board to reconsider its decision. The Sept. 29 vote was 3-2 for the new map, with Tammie Bullard, Francine Scinto and Ann Albertson voting in favor, while Jon Abelow and Lynn Davis voted against transferring the triangle students.

"This is a blatant display of self-interest by some of the board members," said Tustin parent Sean Bradley. "I think it's wrong to go against the committee's recommendations. I urge the board to revisit the issues."

Although students from the triangle have been bused to Foothill High for about 10 years, the thought of busing them even farther to Beckman rankled some.

"I am angry with your decision," said Tustin Ranch parent Andy Fong. "You totally ignored the interests of the community which you swore an oath to uphold. It's unwise to create extra money for transportation. All the schools should share the burden."

West Irvine resident Debra Morrisset said, "In light of the large number of people who disagree with your decision, please listen to us and represent us. We will continue to e-mail you until you do." The Tustin school district includes neighborhoods in northwest Irvine.

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*West Irvine resident  
Debra Morrisset*

Members of the Latino community also protested.

“The new map is unacceptable,” said Eduardo Font. “It’s wrong to bus these kids across town just to satisfy your desire for good test scores. It damages the credibility of Tustin Unified School District. Forced busing is wrong.”

“There is still time to come up with a better solution,” said Antonio Garcia. “Just because we are from another city and a poor neighborhood, we are not going to walk away.”

However, parents from North Tustin whose children were allowed to stay at Foothill and not be transferred to Tustin High, as the committee maps would have done, praised the board for changing the map.

“I thank the board members for standing their ground,” said Cathy Callaway. “We are not racists. We are socially conscientious.”

“I believe the board was confronted with an impossible situation when confronted with the diversity of our population,” said Don Fitch. “I commend the board for doing their due diligence. Thanks for your hard work and I hope you will stay with your decision.”

Tustin resident Louise Baxter said, “We are middle class. We can’t afford to live in North Tustin or Tustin Ranch or West Irvine. Our only concern is proximity and safety issues. I’m amazed and delighted that you listened to our middle-class voices.”

Amin David, president of Los Amigos of Orange County wrote an Oct. 15 letter to the Orange County Grand Jury asking for a formal investigation to ensure there was no discriminatory intent in adopting the school attendance areas.

On learning of this, Superintendent Pete Gorman responded by saying, “Anyone can make a claim of improper action, whether it’s substantiated or baseless. I don’t believe there was any discriminatory intent.”

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